

**Statement by Edward J. Markey (D-MA)**  
**AGING WITH GRACE: FINDINGS FROM THE NUN STUDY**  
**with DR. DAVID SNOWDON**  
**CONGRESSIONAL TASK FORCE ON ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**  
**FEBURARY 27, 2002**

Good afternoon. As co-chair of the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, I want to welcome you and thank you all for being here. I would like to begin by thanking the Alzheimer's Association for helping to host today's briefing and specifically, I'd like to thank Judy Riggs, Bonnie Hogue and Jennifer Zeitzer. I would also like to recognize our distinguished guests from NIA, Dr. Marcelle Morrison-Bogorad, Dr. Tony Phelps, Dr. Richard Salzman and Mr. Kevin Laser, as well as those members of the Task Force who are here with us today.

This morning's front page of the Washington Post features an article entitled "Alzheimer's Gene Screened From Newborn". The piece speaks to genetic engineering which allowed a 30-year-old woman to give birth to a baby free of the gene which is the culprit of early Alzheimer's disease – a tragic illness which has plagued her family for generations. While the issue of genetically engineering a baby is fraught with controversy, the issue of doing all we can to eradicate Alzheimer's Disease is not.

In June of 1999, I joined with my colleague Chris Smith in creating the Bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease to raise awareness among Members of Congress to this devastating disease that affects 4 million people today and will affect 14 million by 2050. The key goals of the Task Force include increasing federal research funding to find new treatments and a cure for Alzheimer's and creating new legislative solutions to deal with the many issues that face Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers.

In a remarkably short period of time, the Task Force has made great strides toward accomplishing these goals. Since 1999, federal funding for Alzheimer's research has climbed to record levels – approximately \$585 million this year. In addition, we've established a new program to fund promising, clinical researchers to focus their careers on developing new treatments for Alzheimer's. And finally, we've expanded the Homebound Definition in the Medicare law to allow for Alzheimer's patients to attend adult day care services as well as religious services without fear of losing their home health benefits.

But there is still work to be done. The costs of Alzheimer's disease will continue to devastate families and will bankrupt Medicare and Medicaid unless science finds a way to prevent Alzheimer's in the millions of baby boomers who are at risk of the disease. Recognizing that demographic imperative, last year, the Alzheimer's Task Force and the Alzheimer's Association set a goal of increasing the annual investment in Alzheimer research at the National Institutes of Health to \$1 billion as soon as possible. We must accelerate the search for a way to prevent the disease in the millions now at risk and we must do it now.

One individual who is dedicated the last decade to learning as much as possible about Alzheimer's as soon as possible is here with us today. We are fortunate and it is an honor to have the opportunity to hear from one of the world's leading experts on Alzheimer's disease, Dr. David Snowdon. Dr. Snowdon earned his Ph.D. in Epidemiology from the University of Minnesota. He is a Professor in the department of Neurology in the College of Medicine and the Sanders-Brown Center on Aging at the University of Kentucky. He is the director of the Nun Study, a longitudinal study of health and aging. Participants in the Nun Study are 678 American members of the School Sisters of Notre Dame religious congregation. The study is funded by the National Institute on Aging with additional support from private foundations.

Nun Study findings have been published in scientific journals including the Journal of the American Medical Association, and the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. In addition, findings from the Nun Study have been featured nationally on The Today Show, CNN, and ABC Nightline. And finally the Nun Study inspired a recently authored book by Dr. Snowdon – Aging with Grace.

With Dr. Snowden today are three remarkable women – all of whom have selflessly agreed to participate in the Nun study so that one day we may know a world without Alzheimer's. I want to thank Sisters Mary Agnes Klug, Genevieve Kunkel and Virginia Geiger of the School Sisters of Notre Dame Province in Baltimore. Sisters Klug, Kunkel and Geiger are participants in the Nun Study. I would also like to thank Sister Mary Lou Simcoe, the Director of Communications for the School Sisters of Notre Dame Baltimore Province who is here with us as well.

Again, I thank you all for being here to learn more about this fascinating research. Dr. Snowdon

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